








- Joe Roche**



Veteran Combat Action Badge Army Overseas Service Ribbon

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Born	1967 (age 52–53) Honolulu, Hawaii , United States
Allegiance	 United States of America
Service/branch	US Army
Years of service	2002-2010
Rank	E-6
Unit	16th Engineer Battalion ^[1] Iraq War
Battles/wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Operation Iraqi Freedom<ul style="list-style-type: none">Invasion of Iraq
Awards	 Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters  Army Achievement Medal  Iraq Campaign Medal  Global War on Terrorism Service Medal  Army Service Ribbon  Army Overseas Service Ribbon  Combat Action Badge

Joseph Roche (born 1967) is an [Iraq War veteran](#) and [conservative commentator](#).

Early life

Roche comes from a family of talented musicians. Roche's father, also named Joseph Roche, was a native of [Madras, India](#) who came to the [United States](#) to study at the [New England Conservatory](#) in [Boston](#).^[2] Roche's mother is from [West Virginia](#). Joseph Roche senior was a [violinist](#) with the [Minnesota Orchestra](#) from 1959–1994 and the *Macalester Trio* from 1969–1994;^[3] his mother Sarita is a [coloratura soprano](#); and his sister Gita is a principal cello of the [Baltimore Opera](#) and the [Baltimore Chamber Orchestra](#).^[4] Joe Roche grew up in the [Kenwood neighborhood](#) in [Minneapolis](#) and graduated from [Minnehaha Academy](#) and in 1998 received a degree in [history](#) from the [University of Minnesota](#).^[5]

Roche became interested in politics and the [Republican Party](#) while a teenager, organizing petition drives and focusing his efforts subjects such as [prayer in school](#) and aid for the [Nicaraguan contras](#).^[1] After graduating high school Roche moved to [Washington, D.C.](#) where he worked for seven years on [conservative campaigns and issues](#).^[1] Roche then returned to Minnesota and enrolled at the [University of Minnesota](#) as a [history](#) major.^[1] In 1990 at an [Independent-Republican Party](#) meeting he submitted a resolution in support of embattled Republican Senator [David Durenberger](#), calling charges of unethical conduct against the Senator "trumped up too much."^[6] In the 1990s Roche began political commentary for the [Minnesota Daily](#), student newspaper at the [University of Minnesota](#). Roche was a frequent critique of [liberals](#) and the [Clinton administration](#) and an advocate for the views of the Republican Party. Despite the controversy surrounding him, Roche won the Minnesota Daily's Harrison Salisbury Annual Achievement Award in 2005.

Military deployment



Spc. Joseph Roche of the 16th Engineer Battalion prepares to go out on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq.

Roche is a self described "geek" who has long followed issues involving the Middle East.^[5] He was frustrated with the way the U.S. responded to terrorism before September 11, citing the attack on the World Trade Center in 1993.^[5] Roche's first military experience was with the [Israel Defense Forces](#), which he for one year of service in October 2000. Roche returned to the US in October 2001 following the [September 11th terrorist attacks](#), stating that "When September 11 happened, I just realized I can't sit out this one."^[5] In 2002 he enlisted in the [United States Army](#) and deployed to Iraq in May 2003 as a member of the [Army's 16th Combat Engineer Battalion](#).^[5] Roche was stationed in [Baghdad](#) and held the rank of [specialist](#). His main responsibility was as a [Humvee](#) driver and gunner.^[5] When President [George W. Bush](#) traveled to Baghdad on [Thanksgiving Day](#) 2003, he shook hands with Roche, who had been in Iraq since the end of May.^[5] Roche had been a vocal advocate of a continued American military presence in Iraq and criticized calls in the United States for a withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, *what they're [the guerrillas] really aiming for is to break the will of the American people.... They know they can't defeat us in Iraq. They're trying to defeat us back here at home.*^[5] During his tour in Iraq, Roche was once driving his Humvee 75 miles per hour when two Iraqi men waved to stop him, preventing him from driving over a roadside bomb. Roche later commented to the [Star Tribune](#) news paper that these men "saved our lives. Iraqis are sticking their necks out for us."^[5]

Post-war life

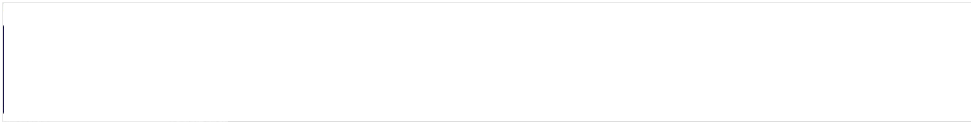
After returning from deployment, Roche was hired by the [Department of Defense](#). Currently Roche is employed by the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#). In 2017 in the aftermath of [Hurricane Harvey](#), Roche deployed to affected areas, including [Florida](#), [Texas](#), [Puerto Rico](#), the [Virgin Islands](#), as a member of the Surge Capacity Force, which was composed of federal employees from various agencies who were attached to [FEMA](#).^[7]

Editorial

Roche's editorial "Keep the faith - we are, the Iraqi people are," written while in the field in Iraq, was widely printed in the conservative press, read on air by [Rush Limbaugh](#) and other conservative talk show hosts. It was quoted by President [George W. Bush](#) at the [Republican National Convention](#) in 2004.^[1]

Works by Joe Roche

- "American exceptionalism demonstrated in Army." *Minnesota Daily*. October 2, 2008.
- "Unfinished business: going back to Iraq." [Lexington Herald-Leader](#). Friday, July 4, 2008.
- "Success in Iraq key to defeating terrorism." *Military*. Vol. XXIV, No. 6. November 2007.
- "A Soldier Speaks: Iraq Veteran says Bush's Surge policy is a huge success." [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#). October 28, 2007.
- "Iraq Vet: Have confidence in U.S., Iraq." *The Asbury Collegian*. November 30, 2006.
- "*Wonderful Time to be a Soldier*." [The Washington Times](#). Friday, August 26, 2005.
- "*Rendezvous with destiny' begins at Fort Leonard Wood*." *Guidon*. Thursday, January 30, 2003.



References

1. ^ [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) Dougherty, Kevin (2004-08-18). "Stripes Spotlight: A 'professor' in a class by himself". *Stars and Stripes*.
2. ^ [Cohen, Ben](#) (2007-07-29). "Joseph Roche fell in love with the violin as a kid - He joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 1959 and also played with the Macalester Trio and the Boston Pops". [Star Tribune](#).
3. ^ [Anthony, Michael](#) (1994-04-24). "Roche's departure ends original Macalester Trio". [Star Tribune](#).
4. ^ [Anthony, Michael](#) (1992-06-09). "Roche family celebrates Gita's, Sarita's new jobs". [Star Tribune](#).
5. ^ [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) [f](#) [g](#) [h](#) [i](#) Hotakainen, Rob (2004-01-10). "Stay or go? Iraq opinions diverge - It's a familiar debate in state, across nation". [Star Tribune](#).
6. ^ [McGrath, Dennis J.](#) (1990-02-28). "Durenberger's precinct backs him - Position on abortion accounts for nays in 11-4 vote". [Star Tribune](#).
7. ^ [David, John](#). "Surging Against the Storm". *U.S. Customs and Border Protection*. Retrieved 2018-05-15.

External links

- [Roche Editorial - Keep the faith - we are, the Iraqi people are](#)
- [Links to articles by and about Joe Roche](#)
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